

## Digest of A Follow-up Audit of the Department of Transportation

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) has implemented most of the audit recommendations found in Utah Legislative Auditor General reports dating back to 1982. As a result we believe that UDOT is functioning at a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness today than it has in the past. This follow-up audit was conducted at the request of Rep. Byron Harward and Joint Majority Leadership to identify the level of compliance with recommendations of past audits. In total, 70 recommendations were made in the past audits dating back to 1982. Because of time constraint, this follow-up review was only able to examine UDOT compliance with 55 of the 70 recommendations.

This follow-up review examined UDOT's compliance to recommendations reported from eight major audits. The follow-up audit found that UDOT management had generally complied with the recommendations of the four most recent audits. These four audits were reported since 1990 and covered a wide variety of issues such as fleet management, building construction, and research of new products.

In addition, the follow-up audit examined the extent of UDOT compliance with four maintenance audits completed 7 to 12 years ago. We found the implementation of some of these audit recommendations more difficult to review because of significant changes in funding and agency operations. In our opinion, the more important recommendations of the maintenance audits have been implemented. However, some of the recommendations have become obsolete because of organizational changes and others were not implemented because management did not agree with the recommendation.

This follow-up audit has been subdivided into three issue areas of past audit work: new product testing and research, fleet management and building construction, and road surface maintenance. The following summaries briefly address our conclusions in each of these areas:

**Research and Materials Operations Are More Directed.** The adoption of new product and research recommendations are important because they add to product development controls which can prevent situations like Syn-crete from happening again. This group within UDOT is receiving greater support from departmental management and is staffed with well-qualified personnel. As a result of recommendation implementation, all new products are tested and qualified by this central office. Outside expertise is also better utilized. Our only concern is that not all products are tested according to UDOT's new products testing policy or, in lieu of that, full documentation of their success is provided elsewhere.

**Fleet Management and Building Construction Issues Are Being Resolved.** UDOT's Maintenance Division has made an effort to comply with past audit recommendations to improve the efficiency of equipment fleet management and to reduce the cost of future maintenance station construction. While efforts have been made to control the equipment fleet, there have also been delays in the implementation of a recommendation to improve vehicle utilization with a method called dual-rate charging. These delays are in spite of the fact that other state agencies have been able to implement similar programs. Audit recommendations for new building construction have all been implemented.

**Maintenance Audits Have Been Partially Implemented.** The most audited portion of UDOT has been its Maintenance Division. Since 1982 there have been four major legislative audits of the division calling for increased use of contracted maintenance, reduction of overweight truck via increased fees and fines, and contingency budgeting. Recommendations calling for increased contracted maintenance were slowly implemented for the first few years but implementation has accelerated in the last six years. This change has occurred because road construction has diminished as road preservation has increased in a natural progression. Recommendations for controlling overweight trucking have followed the same course. These recommendations were not well received in 1982 but, in 1994, increased fine levels have been implemented and are three times higher than recommended. Contingency budgeting has not been implemented but a similar effect can be found in the use of non-lapsing funding from non-standard sources.